

**ALBERTA CROP CONDITIONS REPORT #7**  
**As of July 30, 2009**

**Provincial**

Hot, dry weather covered the province with temperatures reaching into the mid 30's at the time that most crops were progressing through the critical pollination stage, producing significant crop stress particularly in the drier north central and Peace River regions. Crop conditions provincially were virtually unchanged from the July 16 report as the drying soil moisture conditions were off set by the improvements in crop development. Subsoil moisture ratings have improved marginally from the last report to 56% poor/ 26% fair/ 15% good/ 3% excellent.

| Crop         | Provincial Crop Conditions Rating |      |      |           |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|------|------|-----------|
|              | Poor                              | Fair | Good | Excellent |
| Spr. Wheat   | 35%                               | 45%  | 19%  | 1%        |
| Durum Wheat  | 31%                               | 38%  | 28%  | 3%        |
| Barley       | 33%                               | 46%  | 20%  | 1%        |
| Oats         | 33%                               | 46%  | 20%  | 1%        |
| Winter Wheat | 46%                               | 39%  | 14%  | 1%        |
| Canola       | 38%                               | 41%  | 20%  | 1%        |
| Field Peas   | 35%                               | 45%  | 19%  | 1%        |

The July 30<sup>th</sup> Crop Report brings the first yield estimates of the 2009 season. Readers should be reminded that these yield estimates should be viewed with care.

| Crop         | Provincial Yield Estimates (bushels/acre) |      |      |      |      |      |                   |              |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------------|--------------|
|              | 2009<br>(Initial)                         | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 | 2004 | 5 Year<br>Average | % of<br>Ave. |
| Spr. Wheat   | 29.0                                      | 43.7 | 38.9 | 39.7 | 43.3 | 39.9 | 41.1              | 70.6%        |
| Durum Wheat  | 29.0                                      | 39.4 | 32.8 | 38.5 | 43.1 | 42.7 | 39.3              | 73.8%        |
| Barley       | 39.4                                      | 61.1 | 53.3 | 54.6 | 64.5 | 61.4 | 59.0              | 66.8%        |
| Oats         | 42.9                                      | 66.8 | 65.1 | 65.3 | 74.2 | 71.4 | 68.6              | 62.6%        |
| Winter Wheat | 25.6                                      | 46.1 | 45.8 | 40.4 | 46.0 | 43.8 | 44.4              | 57.6%        |
| Canola       | 24.2                                      | 35.7 | 31.5 | 31.7 | 36.7 | 33.4 | 33.8              | 71.6%        |
| Field Peas   | 25.1                                      | 38.7 | 34.8 | 33.3 | 42.0 | 38.3 | 37.4              | 67.1%        |

First cut dryland haying is 62% completed. Yields are poor with fair to good quality. Approximately 30% of the province is anticipating a 2<sup>nd</sup> cut with 1% already completed. The first cut of irrigated alfalfa hay is completed with slightly below average yields but good to excellent quality. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cut is underway with 8% completed. The hot weather has caused a slight decline in pasture ratings to 61% poor/ 32% fair/ 7% good/ 0% excellent. Hay rating are virtually unchanged at 56% poor/ 36% fair/ 8% good/ 0% excellent.

**Southern Alberta**

Crop condition ratings range from unchanged to improved despite the hot weather. Soil moisture is generally not a major issue and the heat helped to bring on crop development with canola and field peas showing significant improvement in their ratings. Crop stage is averaging:

Spring Cereals – late pollination

Winter Cereals – early dough stage

Canola – 28% flowering/ 72% podding

Field Peas – 10% flowering/ 90% podding

Crop condition rating and initial yield estimates:

|              | Crop Condition Rating |      |      |     | Yield Estimates (bu/acre) |                |              |
|--------------|-----------------------|------|------|-----|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | Poor                  | Fair | Good | Exc | 2009 Initial              | 5 Year Average | % of Average |
| Spr Wheat    | 10%                   | 45%  | 41%  | 4%  | 31.8                      | 39.5           | 80.5%        |
| Durum Wheat  | 11%                   | 43%  | 41%  | 5%  | 31.3                      | 40.7           | 76.9%        |
| Barley       | 9%                    | 45%  | 41%  | 5%  | 46.1                      | 55.0           | 83.8%        |
| Oats         | 8%                    | 44%  | 41%  | 7%  | 53.3                      | 63.9           | 83.4%        |
| Winter Wheat | 21%                   | 44%  | 33%  | 2%  | 33.7                      | 45.6           | 74.0%        |
| Canola       | 16%                   | 44%  | 37%  | 3%  | 26.4                      | 31.6           | 83.4%        |
| Field Peas   | 21%                   | 42%  | 33%  | 4%  | 27.8                      | 36.1           | 76.9%        |

First cut dryland hay is 91% completed with fair to good quality. Very little 2<sup>nd</sup> cut is expected. The first cut of irrigated alfalfa hay is completed with good to excellent quality. Approximately 8% of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cut has been completed.

Sub soil moisture ratings have improved slightly to 16% poor/ 28% fair/ 40% good/ 16% excellent. The hot weather has brought about declines to pasture and hay ratings, principally in the good category slipping to fair with 43% poor/ 39% fair/ 17% good/ 1% excellent.

**Central Alberta**

Despite the hot weather, crop condition ratings improved as crops were able to maintain themselves on the precipitation received in the first half of July and make crop development improvements.

Crop stage averages:

Spring Cereals – late pollination

Winter Cereals – entering dough stage

Canola – 44% flowering & 56% podding

Field Peas – 13% flowering & 87% podding

Crop condition rating and initial yield estimates:

|              | Crop Condition Rating |      |      |     | Yield Estimates (bu/acre) |                |              |
|--------------|-----------------------|------|------|-----|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | Poor                  | Fair | Good | Exc | 2009 Initial              | 5 Year Average | % of Average |
| Spr Wheat    | 42%                   | 46%  | 12%  | 0%  | 25.4                      | 40.1           | 63.4%        |
| Durum Wheat  | 68%                   | 28%  | 4%   | 0%  | 13.4                      | 35.9           | 37.3%        |
| Barley       | 38%                   | 48%  | 14%  | 0%  | 38.4                      | 59.7           | 64.3%        |
| Oats         | 38%                   | 47%  | 15%  | 0%  | 39.5                      | 66.2           | 59.7%        |
| Winter Wheat | 56%                   | 34%  | 10%  | 0%  | 22.4                      | 44.6           | 50.2%        |
| Canola       | 41%                   | 43%  | 16%  | 0%  | 21.8                      | 32.0           | 68.2%        |
| Field Peas   | 42%                   | 47%  | 11%  | 0%  | 21.8                      | 37.2           | 58.6%        |

1<sup>st</sup> cut dryland hay is 68% completed with quality rated as poor to fair. Approximately one-third of the region is anticipating a 2<sup>nd</sup> cut with 4% completed to date.

Subsoil moisture ratings improved slightly with a small move from the poor to the fair category at 43% poor/ 39% fair/ 17% good/ 1% excellent. Pasture and hay ratings improved significantly with a large reduction in the poor category and improvements to the fair and good categories to 56% poor/ 33% fair/ 11% good/ 0% excellent.

## North East Alberta

The effect of the hot weather varied depending on the location in the region. Areas in the east, along the Saskatchewan border had received more precipitation earlier in the month and were able to take the heat better and improve their crop development. Areas more central and northerly had not received as much precipitation and were placed under severe stress by the heat. Grasshoppers continue to be an economic problem across the northern portion of the region.

Crop stage averages:

Spring Cereals – early pollination

Winter Cereals – late milk stage

Canola – 47% flowering & 53% podding

Field Peas – 26% flowering & 74% podding

Crop condition rating and initial yield estimates:

|              | Crop Condition Rating |      |      |     | Yield Estimates (bu/acre) |                |              |
|--------------|-----------------------|------|------|-----|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | Poor                  | Fair | Good | Exc | 2009 Initial              | 5 Year Average | % of Average |
| Spr Wheat    | 35%                   | 52%  | 13%  | 0%  | 25.2                      | 40.6           | 62.0%        |
| Durum Wheat  | 50%                   | 30%  | 20%  | 0%  | 20.0                      | 42.6           | 47.0%        |
| Barley       | 35%                   | 53%  | 12%  | 0%  | 36.4                      | 58.8           | 61.9%        |
| Oats         | 35%                   | 53%  | 12%  | 0%  | 38.8                      | 69.8           | 55.6%        |
| Winter Wheat | 43%                   | 49%  | 8%   | 0%  | 20.6                      | 42.2           | 48.8%        |
| Canola       | 46%                   | 47%  | 7%   | 0%  | 21.1                      | 34.0           | 62.1%        |
| Field Peas   | 37%                   | 53%  | 10%  | 0%  | 25.2                      | 40.0           | 63.0%        |

1<sup>st</sup> cut dryland hay is 49% completed with quality rated as fair to good. Approximately 40% of the region is anticipating a 2<sup>nd</sup> cut with nothing completed to date. Sub soil moisture ratings remain unchanged at 71% poor/ 20% fair/ 9% good/ 0% excellent. Hay and pasture ratings are also unchanged at 70% poor/ 27% fair/ 3% good/ 0% excellent.

## North West Alberta

On account of poor soil moisture, the hot weather placed crops under extreme stress in virtually all areas of the region at a time when most crops were in full pollination due to the delayed crop development. The result could be significant yield damage. Spring and winter cereals experienced a decline in their crop condition ratings while canola and field peas improved. Crop stage averages:

Spring Cereals – completing pollination

Winter Cereals – entering dough stage

Canola – 33% flowering & 67% podding

Field Peas – 26% flowering & 74% podding

Crop condition rating and initial yield estimates:

|              | Crop Condition Rating |      |      |     | Yield Estimates (bu/acre) |                |              |
|--------------|-----------------------|------|------|-----|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | Poor                  | Fair | Good | Exc | 2009 Initial              | 5 Year Average | % of Average |
| Spr Wheat    | 52%                   | 42%  | 6%   | 0%  | 30.5                      | 45.6           | 66.9%        |
| Barley       | 50%                   | 43%  | 6%   | 0%  | 35.9                      | 66.1           | 54.3%        |
| Oats         | 49%                   | 46%  | 5%   | 0%  | 38.2                      | 73.0           | 52.3%        |
| Winter Wheat | 66%                   | 32%  | 8%   | 0%  | 24.5                      | 46.0           | 53.3%        |
| Canola       | 54%                   | 40%  | 6%   | 0%  | 25.1                      | 39.7           | 63.2%        |
| Field Peas   | 51%                   | 43%  | 6%   | 0%  | 24.6                      | 40.3           | 61.1%        |

1<sup>st</sup> cut dryland hay is 58% completed with quality rated as fair. Approximately 75% of the region is anticipating a 2<sup>nd</sup> cut with nothing completed to date.

Sub soil moisture ratings are unchanged at 79% poor/ 21% fair/ 0% good/ 0% excellent. Hay and pasture ratings have declined to 61% poor/ 38% fair/ 1% good/ 0% excellent. Grasshoppers are an economic problem in approximately one-third of the region.

#### Peace River District

The hot weather of the past two weeks placed crops across the region under severe stress and caused a significant decline in crop condition ratings as approximately 15 rating points moved from good/ excellent into the poor/fair rating categories. Crops in the region are the most advanced in the province with crop stage averaging:

Spring Cereals – pollination completed & starting to fill

Canola – 9% flowering & 91% podding

Field Peas – 7% flowering & 93% podding

Crop condition rating and initial yield estimates:

|            | Crop Condition Rating |      |      |     | Yield Estimates (bu/acre) |                   |                 |
|------------|-----------------------|------|------|-----|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
|            | Poor                  | Fair | Good | Exc | 2009<br>Initial           | 5 Year<br>Average | % of<br>Average |
| Spr Wheat  | 30%                   | 42%  | 27%  | 1%  | 32.3                      | 39.4              | 81.9%           |
| Barley     | 32%                   | 39%  | 28%  | 1%  | 40.4                      | 54.9              | 73.6%           |
| Oats       | 31%                   | 40%  | 28%  | 1%  | 45.8                      | 70.3              | 65.1%           |
| Canola     | 26%                   | 34%  | 38%  | 2%  | 27.0                      | 31.5              | 85.7%           |
| Field Peas | 21%                   | 39%  | 40%  | 0%  | 26.8                      | 33.0              | 81.3%           |

1<sup>st</sup> cut dryland hay is 44% completed with quality rated as good to excellent. The potential for a 2<sup>nd</sup> cut hay crop is very low at this time. Sub soil moisture ratings have declined significantly from 70% poor to 78% poor/ 20% fair/ 2% good/ 0% excellent. Hay and pasture ratings have incurred significant declines to 63% poor/ 33% fair/ 4% good.

Prepared by Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, in cooperation with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. For more information, please contact the writer.

James Wright  
Project Manager  
Actuarial & Program Readiness  
AFSC, Lacombe AB  
Telephone (403)782-8336  
Email: james.wright@afsc.ca